

*Released April 2018
Updated July 2022*

Evidence Submission Requirements **for the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences**



HARRIS COUNTY INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES
HOUSTON, TEXAS

SCIENCE | SERVICE | INTEGRITY

Crime Laboratory Testing Services

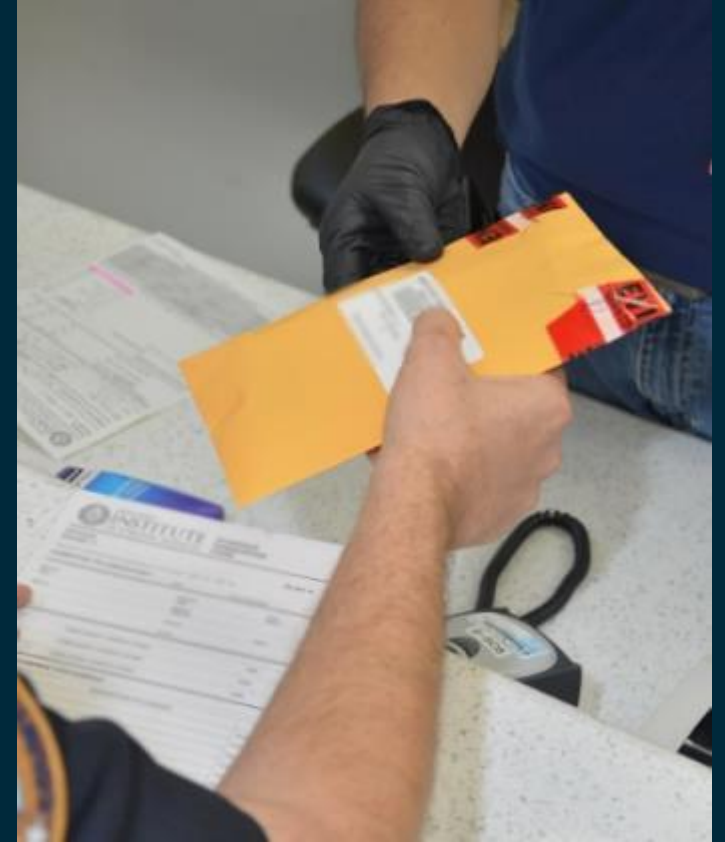
- **Drug Chemistry**
- **Forensic Genetics**
- **Forensic Toxicology**
- **Trace Evidence (GSR / Fire Debris)**
- **Firearms Identification**

Evidence Submission Locations & Times

Evidence Submission Times

Most evidence can be submitted to the Institute 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- The following evidence must only be submitted during regular business hours:
 - Firearms
 - Fire Debris
 - Liquid Evidence (exception: blood tubes)
 - Oversized Evidence



Ways to Submit Evidence

Normal Business Hours

Monday – Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

At:

1861 Old Spanish Trail
2450 Holcombe (DNA evidence only)

After Hours

Holidays and weekends,
between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Exceptions: Firearms, Fire Debris,
Liquid Evidence and Bulk Evidence
cannot be submitted after-hours

1861 OST Contributor Entry Gate



Entry Gate Call Box



Evidence/Delivery Entrance

1861 OST Entrance to Evidence Areas



Evidence Parking



Contributor Entry/Call Box

1861 OST Officer Intake Lobby



1861 OST After-Hours Drop Location



Submission During Regular Business Hours

Monday – Friday | 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.



DNA Evidence

**Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences –
Forensic Genetics Laboratory Evidence Reception**

2450 Holcombe Blvd., Suite 7, Houston, TX 77021

(Located on the John P. McGovern Campus of the Texas Medical Center)

Afterhours (DNA) Submissions

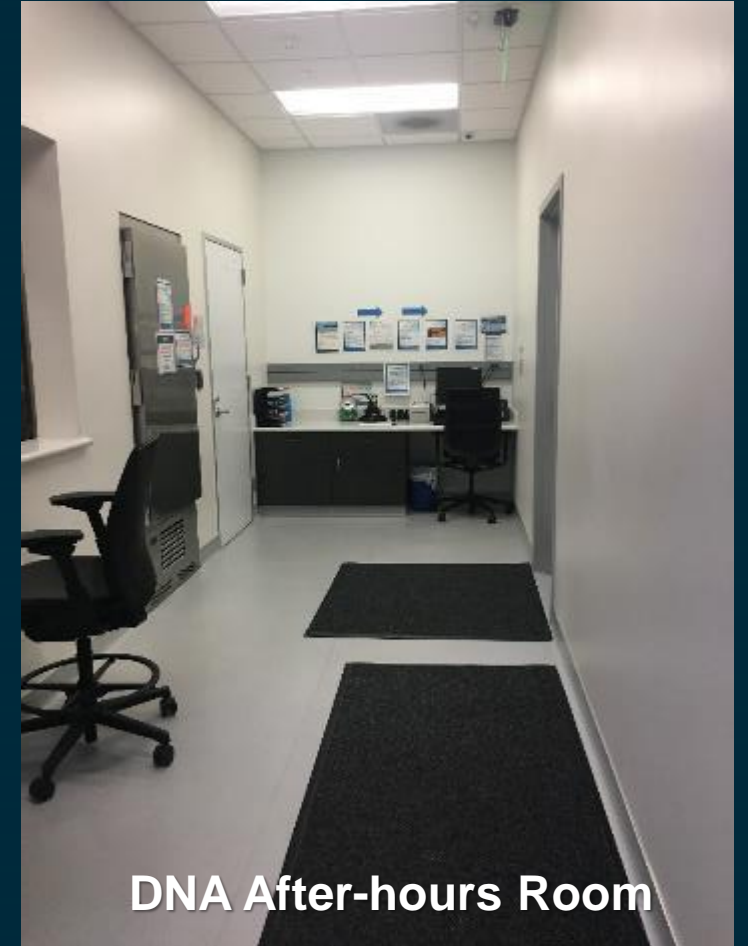
(Evenings, weekends and on Harris County holidays)



After-hours entry door



Interior door to After-hours



DNA After-hours Room

DNA Evidence After-Hours Submissions
2450 Holcombe Blvd., Suite 7, Houston, TX 77021

NOTE: All Submission locations are secured and monitored.

Special Evidence Considerations

- **Refrigeration Required:**
 - Sexual Assault Kits
 - Biological Specimen Kit
 - Vials of blood
 - Urine
- **Ensure samples are refrigerated prior to submission.**
- **Clothing and DNA Swabs do not require refrigeration.**



Evidence Submission Criteria

Evidence Submission Criteria

Proper evidence submission ensures a safe and timely start for lab analysis.

Evidence Must be:

- ✓ Properly Packaged
- ✓ Properly Sealed and Initialed
- ✓ Properly Labeled
- ✓ Accompanied by a completed Evidence Submission Form



**If evidence is submitted incorrectly,
the Institute's staff will contact you to correct it.**

Evidence Submission Criterion #1

Evidence should be properly packaged in a container best suited for safety and maintaining the integrity of the evidence.



Must be deemed safe before it will be accepted

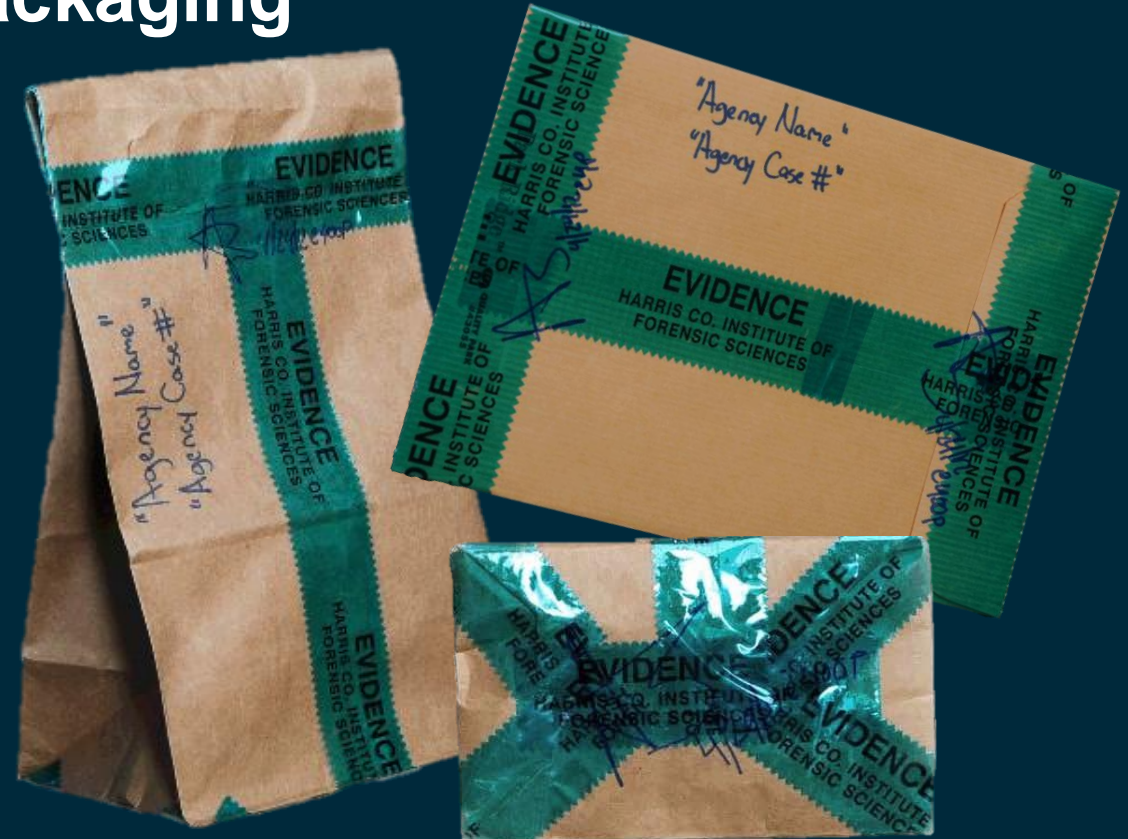
Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Drug, DWI Blood Tubes, Trace Evidence

- Paper or plastic
- Proper seals and initials on packaging

DNA Evidence

- Paper
- Evidence must be dried before submission



Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Fire Debris

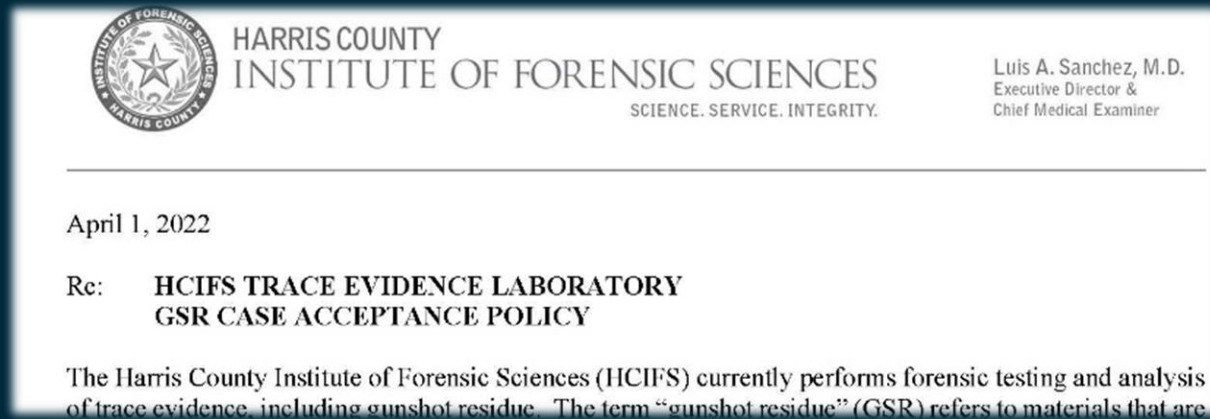
- Metal Cans w/ lids
 - **Proper headspace** = no more than half the container should be filled.



Fire Debris must be submitted during regular business hours.

Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Gun Shot Residue (GSR) Case Acceptance Policy



- **Submission form must include:**
 - Time of alleged firearm discharge and collection of GSR stubs
 - If handbags are used prior to stubbing:
 - Include the date and time of bagging and removal

Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Gun Shot Residue (GSR)

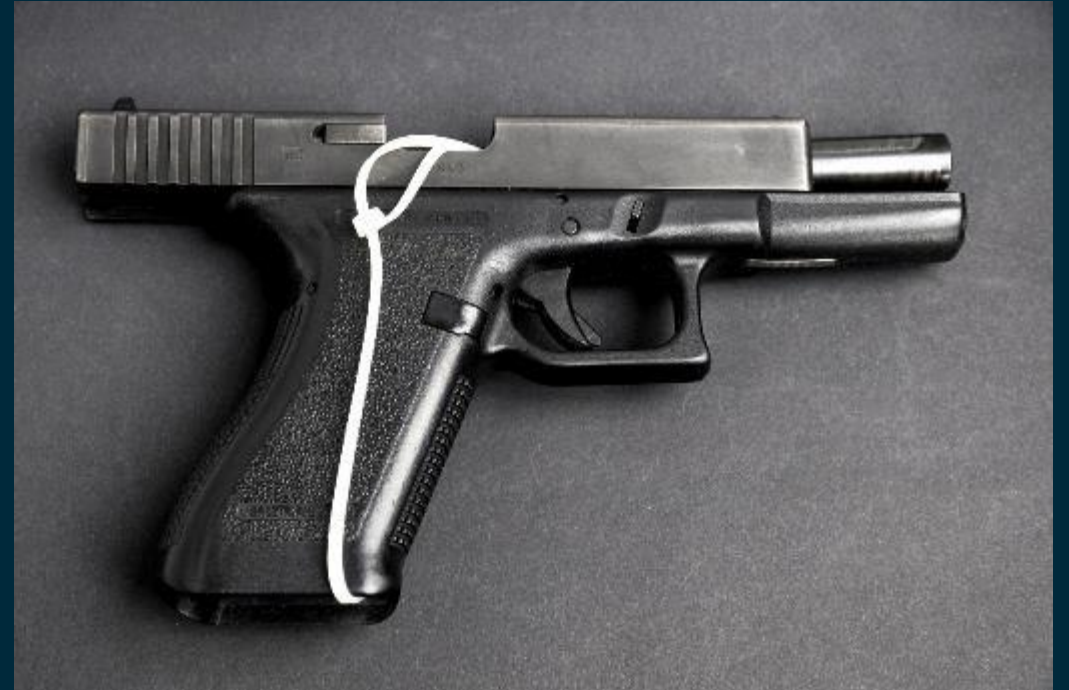
- Submit only stubs for GSR testing.
- Swabs, clothing, and other items will not be analyzed.
- Contact Director of Trace Evidence, Jason Schroeder with questions.
 - Jason.Schroeder@ifs.hctx.net



Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Firearms Evidence

- Place a zip tie through the action (magazine well or with cylinder open).
- It must be deemed safe before it will be accepted.



All Firearm evidence must be submitted during regular business hours.

Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Firearms Evidence

- Seal within a package/container that permits clear viewing of all items.
- Package ammunition separately from firearm.
- BB/Pellet/Air guns must conform to the same packaging and safety requirements as ordinary firearms.



All Firearm evidence must be submitted during regular business hours.

Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Syringes & Sharps

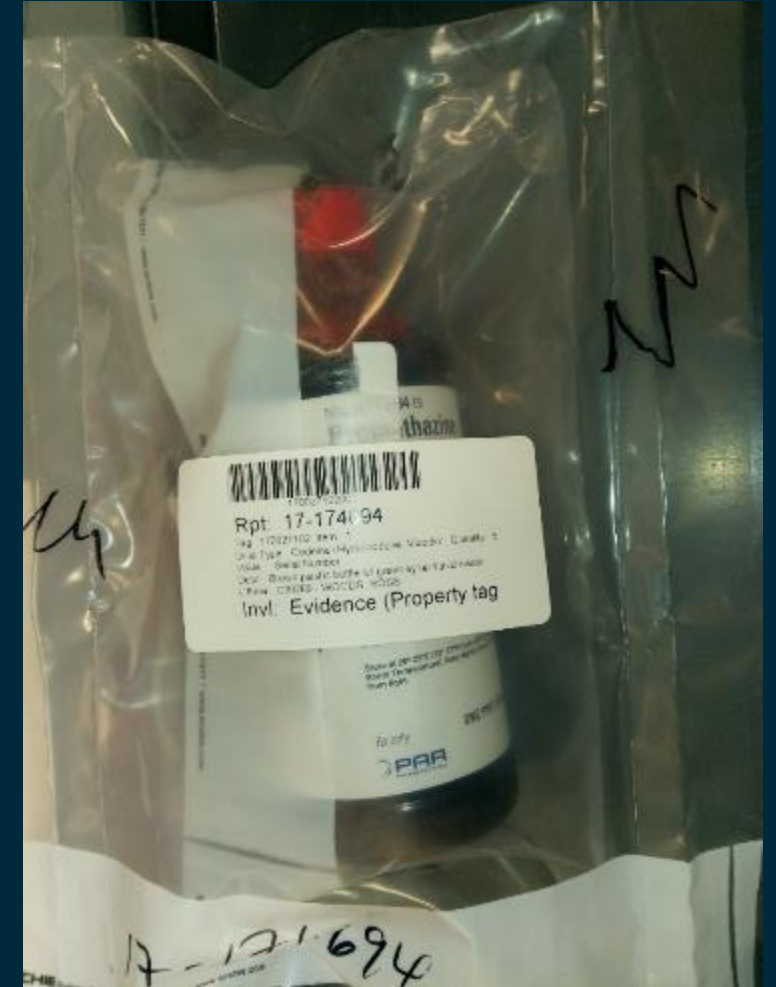
- Includes: Blades, Needles, Glass
 - Glass bottled, bongs, pipes, etc.
- Must be submitted in puncture-resistant containers



Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Non-Biological Liquid Evidence

- Non-biological liquid evidence must be submitted and secured in a leak proof container and double-bagged in a clear plastic bag
- Cannot be submitted in the after-hours lockers



Liquid evidence must be submitted during regular business hours.

Evidence Submission Criterion #1 (cont'd)

Wet Evidence & Plant Material - Must be dried

- Any wet evidence and fresh plant material must be dried at the agency before submitting & packaged in paper envelop/bag to prevent mold. (e.g., marihuana, mushrooms, khat, etc.)



Fresh marihuana plant



Dried marihuana plant



Evidence Submission Criterion #2

Evidence Must be Properly Sealed

- A proper seal can be achieved by using one or a combination of the following:
 - Heat Seal
 - Tape Seal



Evidence Submission Criterion #2 (cont'd)

Evidence Must be Properly Sealed

A proper seal is achieved when:

1. The contents of the packaging cannot readily escape
2. Tampering with the packaging results in the obvious damage and alteration to the package and/or its seal
3. All openings and seams that are not heat sealed need to be taped over and initialed.

Person that sealed the evidence, both heat seal or tape seal, must write their initials across BOTH the seal and packaging



Evidence Submission Criterion #3

Evidence Must be Properly Labeled:

- Evidence must also be properly labeled with:
 - Name of the submitting agency
 - Case Number/Offense Number



Barcode containing the information above may be used (required for HCSO/Constables), as an alternative to writing the information.

Evidence Submission Criterion #4

Evidence Must Be Accompanied by an Evidence Submission Form

- You may obtain an Evidence Submission Form from:
 - The Institute's evidence staff during regular business hours
 - At the Institute's after-hours locations
 - Your agency's duty office
 - Download it from the Institute's Evidence Testing and Submission web page



Evidence Submission Criterion #4 (cont'd)

DRUG EVIDENCE - Submission Form Requirements

- Submission form must indicate under Type of Analysis:
 - **Charges Accepted** – evidence needs testing to support a drug charge or unlawful carry of a weapon
 - **To Be Warrant** – evidence needs testing to file a warrant
- If expedited testing is needed To Be Warrant
 - “Rush Priority for Drug Warrant” – must be checked
 - “Results Needed By” – must be filled in
- **All drug evidence requires an individual and DOB on submission form**
 - *Only exception:* Ongoing Investigation (must be indicated on form)

Evidence for Destruction is not Accepted

Evidence Submission Criterion #4 (cont'd)

Juvenile Drug Evidence

- Charges Involving a Juvenile
- **If accepted:**
 - A letter from the HCDAO needs to be provided with the evidence submission form
- **If To Be Warrant:**
 - only presumptive testing will be performed

Evidence for Destruction is not Accepted

Special Evidence Considerations

Special Evidence Considerations – Drug Evidence

- **Bulk Evidence:**

- **Marihuana** – no more than 200 lbs.
- **Other Substances** – no more than 20 kilos
- If the weight exceeds the above-mentioned amounts, core sampling will be performed by HCIFS lab personnel at an off-site location.

Contact the Drug Chemistry Director, Kay McClain, to arrange for sampling offsite - Kay.McClain@ifs.hctx.net

Special Evidence Considerations

Properly Secured Firearm Examples



Tube fed firearms: Remove tube assembly

Special Evidence Considerations

Properly Secured Firearm Examples



Tube fed firearms: Zip tie through the action

Special Evidence Considerations

Properly Secured Firearm Examples



Use a thick zip tie and then slowly ride the bolt rearward.

Special Evidence Considerations

Properly Secured Firearm Examples



**Zip tie through the
action and magazine.**



**Zip tie around the back
of the cylinder to keep it open.**

Evidence Submission Forms

<https://ifs.harriscountytexas.gov/Pages/EvidenceSubmissionAndTesting.aspx>

HARRIS COUNTY INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES **DNA EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM** [Print](#)

OFFENSE REPORT #: _____ **ML/OC #:** _____
Has prior evidence been submitted on this case? ☐ Yes ☐ No

SUBMITTED TO LABORATORY: _____ Date _____ Time Submitted _____ Submitting Officer _____

Offense Type: _____ Offense Date: _____ Case Officer: _____
Agency: _____ Agency Address: _____
City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER _____ DOB: _____ RACE: _____ SEX: _____
☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER _____ DOB: _____ RACE: _____ SEX: _____

ITEM #	ITEM DESCRIPTION: (e.g. swabs from vehicle, swabs from knife, blue t-shirt, etc...)	ANALYSIS TYPE: (B, C, T)*	RELATION OF ITEM TO OFFENSE: (e.g. suspect blood at scene, clothing worn by suspect, etc...)

*B = Body Fluid (blood, saliva) C = Wearer of Clothing T = Touch DNA

KNOWN REFERENCE SAMPLES:

NAME:	ROLE: C = Complainant S = Suspect O = Other (If other, please explain - witness, elimination, parent, etc...)

If requesting DNA analysis, is Latent Print analysis: ☐ Completed ☐ Not Required ☐ Unknown
Additional analysis requested on these items? ☐ Drug Chemistry ☐ Toxicology ☐ Trace Evidence ☐ Firearms

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - LABORATORY USE ONLY.

DROP BOX	REFRIGERATOR	HAND DELIVERED	SEALED BY:	SUBMITTING AGENCY	OTHER:

DATE/TIME RECEIVED: _____ RECEIVED BY: _____
DATE/TIME RELEASED: _____ BY: _____ RELEASED TO: _____
DATE/TIME RELEASED: _____ BY: _____ RELEASED TO: _____

THIS EVIDENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED BY ANOTHER LABORATORY.

DNA Evidence Submission Form | 2450 Holcombe Blvd. | Houston, TX 77021 | 832-927-5300 | IFSGLabAdmin@ifs.hctx.net

Form #: FEF.018 Released: March 2018 Procedure #: QAE07.0001

Chain of
Custody
information
goes here

HARRIS COUNTY INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES **EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM** [Print Form](#) [Reset Form](#)

☐ RUSH PRIORITY FOR DRUG WARRANT
RESULTS NEEDED BY: _____

OFFENSE REPORT #: _____ **ML/OC #:** _____

Has prior evidence been submitted on this case? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Offense Type: _____ Offense Date: _____ Case Officer: _____
Agency: _____ Agency Address: _____
City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER _____ DOB: _____
☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER _____ DOB: _____
☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER _____ DOB: _____

ITEM #	QTY or WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE	TYPES OF ANALYSIS: as appropriate
			Drug Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Charges Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> To Be Warrant
			Trace Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Gunshot Residue <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Debris <input type="checkbox"/> Paint
			Toxicology <input type="checkbox"/>
			Firearms <input type="checkbox"/>

SUBMITTED TO LABORATORY: _____ Date _____ Time _____ Submitting Officer _____

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION - LABORATORY USE ONLY

☐ Drop Box ☐ Refrigerator ☐ Hand Delivered **SEALED BY:** ☐ Submitting Agency ☐ Laboratory ☐ Other
Comments: _____

Date/Time Received: _____ Received By: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____

THIS EVIDENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED BY ANOTHER LABORATORY.

Evidence Submission Form | 1861 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX 77054 | 832-927-5004 | 832-927-5282

Form #: FEF.006 Rev: 8 Procedure #: QAE07.0001

FEF.018

For DNA Submissions Only

FEF.006

**For all submissions other than DNA
This form is also for blood (DWI).**

Chain of Custody Information

On both Evidence Submission Forms:

- Enter date, time, and print the submitting officer's name

SUBMITTED TO LABORATORY: _____
Date Time Submitting Officer

- Failure to complete this information may result in testing delays

HARRIS COUNTY INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM

☐ RUSH PRIORITY FOR DRUG WARRANT
RESULTS NEEDED BY: _____

OFFENSE REPORT #: _____ ML/OC #: _____

Has prior evidence been submitted on this case? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Offense Type: _____ Offense Date: _____ Case Officer: _____
Agency: _____ Agency Address: _____
City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER (Last Name, First, MI) DOB: _____
☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER (Last Name, First, MI) DOB: _____
☐ COMPLAINANT ☐ SUSPECT ☐ OTHER (Last Name, First, MI) DOB: _____

ITEM #	QTY or WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION OF EVIDENCE

TYPES OF ANALYSIS: as appropriate

☐ Drug Chemistry
☐ Charges Accepted
☐ To Be Warrant

☐ Trace Evidence
☐ Gunshot Residue
☐ Fire Debris
☐ Paint

☐ Toxicology
☐ Firearms

SUBMITTED TO LABORATORY: _____
Date Time Submitting Officer

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SECTION - LABORATORY USE ONLY

☐ Drop Box ☐ Refrigerator ☐ Hand Delivered

SEALED BY: ☐ Submitting Agency ☐ Laboratory ☐ Other
Comments: _____

Date/Time Received: _____ Received By: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____
Date/Time Received: _____ By: _____ Released To: _____

THIS EVIDENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED BY ANOTHER LABORATORY.

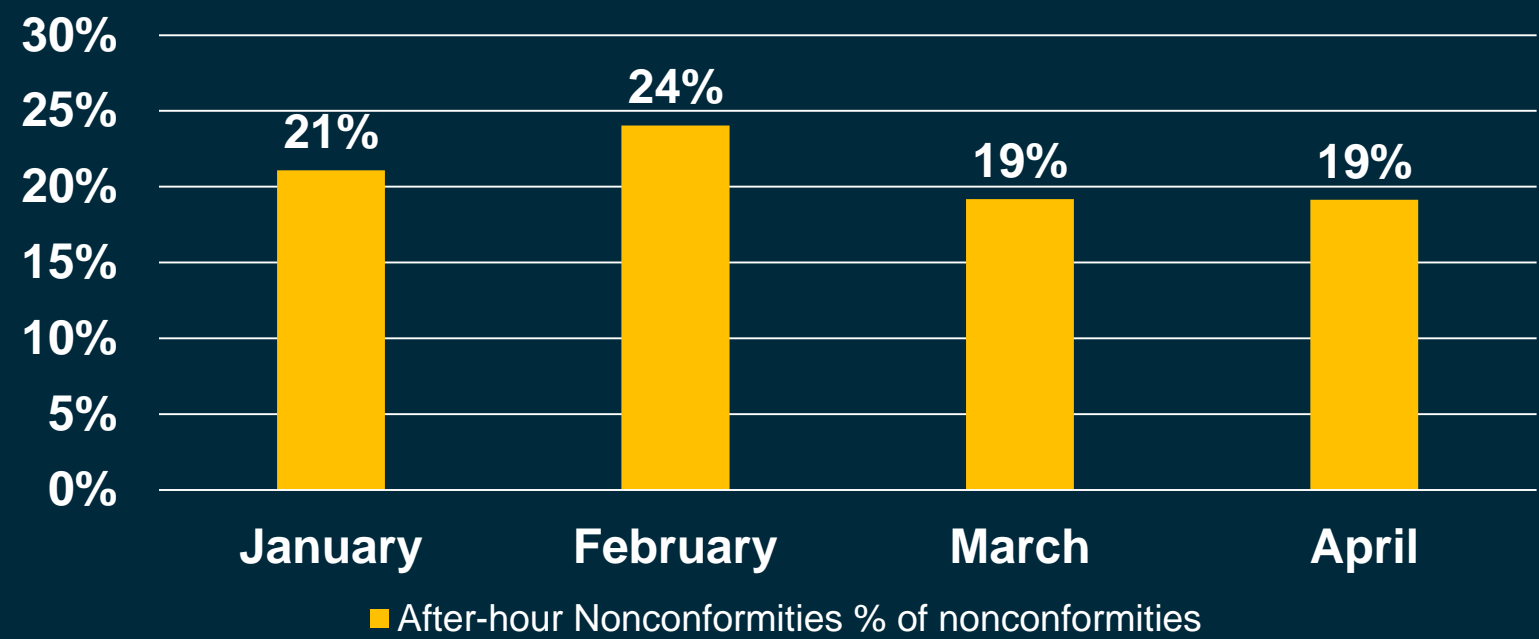
Evidence Submission Form 11861 Old Spanish Trail Houston, TX 77064 | 832-927-5004 | 832-927-5389

Form #: FJF-006 Rev: 8 Procedure #: QAL07-0001

Common Nonconformities

Nonconformities

After-hour Evidence Nonconformities



Month	# Nonconformities	Total Cases	% of nonconformities
January	47	223	21%
February	44	183	24%
March	37	193	19%
April	36	188	19%

Common Nonconformities

- Not sealed properly (not all seams/ entrances sealed)
- Bag sealed, but no initials over the seal and bag
- Information on evidence packaging does not match items being submitted
 - Missing or wrong information on the evidence submission form – Suspect name and date of birth, submitting agency information, date of offense, type of analysis requested



Common Nonconformities (cont'd)

- **Incomplete evidence submission form**
 - Missing submitting information

SUBMITTED TO LABORATORY: _____

Date

Time

Submitting Officer

- **Evidence submission form inside sealed evidence packaging**
- **No evidence description on submission form**

Any Nonconformity will require verification or in-person correction depending on the severity

For assistance or for more information contact:

Forensic Evidence Section

1861 Old Spanish Trail: 2450 Holcombe (DNA):
832-927-5291 832-927-5383

*Calls are answered Monday through Friday,
between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.,
with the exception of Harris County holidays.*

Additional information available at:
ifs.harriscountytexas.gov/Pages/EvidenceSubmissionAndTesting.aspx



INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

Forensic Evidence Intake

Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences

1861 Old Spanish Trail | Houston, TX 77054

ifs.harriscountytexas.gov

